- Production of planting materials through Departmental Nurseries and Certified nurseries by growers with the assistance of the Board.
- Cardamom Replanting Scheme; Rs 9,000/- per hq. subsidy
- Water Harvesting Scheme; 25-50% subsidy.
- Improved cardamom curing devices; 33.33% subsidy.
- Rain Water Harvesting Scheme; 33.33% subsidy.

Steps to Increase Rubber Production

3363. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether rubber output is very less compared to consumption;

(b) if so, whether any action has been taken to increase rubber output;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) No Sir. The production of Natural Rubber (NR) has been increasing. However, the consumption of NR is also on the increase and at times it outpaces production. During the year 2005-06, the production of NR has been slightly more than consumption.

(b) to (d) The Govt, of lndia through the Rubber Board is implementing the Ruber Plantation Development Scheme to increase the production and productivity of NR in the country. Under the scheme, financial incentives and technical assistance is provided for new planting and replanting. Rubber cultivation has been extended to non-traditional regions and a separate scheme for the development of Rubber Plantations in the North Eastern Region is also being implemented.

Tea/Coffee Plantation in Assam

3364. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government plan a series of initiatives to boost tea/coffee

plantation which has been passing through rough weather due to global competition;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of the initiatives likely to be made available to Assam for tea plantation being the largest tea plantation State in India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b)Anumber of steps have been taken by the Government to help the Indian tea industry. These include, withdrawal of the additional duty of excise of Re. 1 per kg on tea from 2005-06, sanctioning of schemes for grant of financial assistance for production of orthodox teas and assistance to R&D institutions to be financed from the Special Fund set up with the collections of additional excise duty on tea, issue of a new Tea (Distribution and Export) Control Order 2005 in order to maintain quality and retain the brand equity of Indian teas, reducing the import duty on tea bagging & packaging machinery used to improve quality and add value to Indian tea to a rate of 5%, extending subsidy for setting up of new factories for manufacture of orthodox teas by all producers, continuance of the subsidy on export of tea through ICD Amingaon in Assam and notification of the Darjeeling tea area as an Agri Export Zone. A number of developmental schemes are being implemented by the Tea Board during the 10th Five Year Plan for enhancing productivity, quality and maketability of tea produced in the country. Government is also examining ways and means of introducing a programme for massive replantation and rejuvenation of old tea bushes. The detailed costing and modalities of funding the programme, including setting up of a Special Purpose Tea Fund, is under consideration.

In order to alleviate the debt burden of the coffee growers, Government of India has sanctioned a Special Coffee Relief Package. During the 10th Plan period, Coffee Board has been implementing a number of schemes for improving the productivity, quality and marketability of Indian coffee in order to achieve competitiveness in global markets and for the overall development of the coffee industry. Financial suport is extended to small coffee growers for making capital investments for replantation, quality upgradation and water augmentation etc. Government has also reduced import duty on certain types of coffee processing machinery to 5% which

is being continued in 2006-07. Steps being taken for boosting coffee exports include carrying out communication initiatives in key overseas markets to enhance the image of Indian coffee as well as to improve market share, shifting product mix from Robusta in favour of Arabica, participating in important overseas trade fairs, organizing Buyer-Seller Meets and instituting Export awards to encourage exporters. The export cess of Rs. 500 per MT on coffee was abolished by the Government in an effort to make Indian coffees more competitive.

(c) All the initiatives being taken for the Indian tea industry are available to the tea industry in Assam.

Vishesh Krishi Upaj Yojana

3365. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the salient features of Vishesh Krishi Upaj Yojana launched by Government;

(b) the details of funds allocated so far for the export of fruits, vegetables, flowers and their value added products, year-wise and State-wise;

(c) whether steps have been taken to identify areas where such export potentials are high in Tamil Nadu; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) Vishesh Krishi Upaj Yojana was introduced in the Foreign Trade Policy announced on 31st August, 2004 to promote exports of Fruits, Vegetables, Flowers, Minor Forest Produce and their value added products. In the Annual Supplement of Foreign Trade Policy issued on 8th April, 2005, Dairy, Poultry and their value added products were also included for benefits under the scheme. In the second Annual Supplement of the Foreign Trade Policy issued on 7th April, 2006, Gram Udyog products have also been included within the ambit of the scheme and the scheme has been renamed as "Vishesh Krishi and Gram Udyog Yojana." The eligible exports are